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MAYOR'S TRANSITION OFFICE
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M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Honorable Sharpe James DATE: February 18, 1987

FROM: Gustav Heningsburg *GH*

RE: Newark: 20 years later

Be reminded that the summer of 1987 will mark the 20th anniversary of Newark's infamous civil disorders of 1967. I believe we can all reasonably anticipate that in the next several months, the City will be visited by a whole variety of electronic and print media coming in here to do stories on "Newark: 20 years later." Some of that coverage will be sensitive and thoughtful, but most will probably be sensational and probably damaging to Newark's emerging new image.

This memo comes to recommend the possibility of your appointing a small committee of people to be charged with the responsibility of developing and implementing appropriate ways for this tragic milestone in Newark's history to be commemorated.

Such a committee would need to be made up of serious, thoughtful people who enjoy public credibility, and who are able to examine the event in the larger context of what it meant to Newark then...it's impact over the past two decades...and what it means for our future.

This is obviously a delicate matter, and will have to be addressed with sensitivity and integrity. I don't believe you have the option of ignoring the anniversary, because the rest of the world...reminded by the press...will not let it go by unnoticed. Taking such an initiative, several months in advance, is...in my judgment...a statesman like and appropriate strategy for you to undertake. The make-up of such a committee should certainly include representatives from our University community, the Clergy, Business (here I include corporate and small business), the community, the library and museum. Some money should be made available, from public and private sources to facilitate the work of such a committee.

This anniversary should be a time for appropriate reflection, and thoughtful review, study and commemoration. It was a tragic time for all of us involved, and changed like no other event in the City's 150 year history. I need not remind you, for example, that your own political career was one indirect result of the riots.

I hope you will give this recommendation every consideration, and act upon it quickly. There remain only a few short months before the actual dates of the anniversary. I will be happy to help in any way I can.